

a whole in wonderful ways—let me just list some of the recognition Youth Link has received in their 18 years of service:

Back in 1992, the National League of Cities awarded Youth Link an award for innovation and in 1994, the Washington State Traffic Safety Commission recognized Youth Link for excellence in Youth & Government Partnerships for their Bellevue Safe Rides program. The recognition has continued, as evidenced by 3 years—2006, 2007 and 2008—with Bellevue being recognized as one of the best communities in our Nation for young people.

The unprecedented efforts of people like Helena Stephens, the manager of Family, Youth and Teen Services, and Terry Smith, assistant Parks and Community Services director, do not go unnoticed and have forever altered the landscape of the Bellevue community. And the outstanding volunteerism and spirit of public service of the youth involved in Youth Link is truly inspirational and a perfect example of generations of Americans coming together to improve an already great community.

INTRODUCING A RESOLUTION URGING THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ TO RECOGNIZE THE RIGHT OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL TO EXIST AND TO ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 5, 2008

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of legislation urging the Government of the Republic of Iraq to recognize the right of the State of Israel to exist and to establish diplomatic relations with Israel.

As Congress joins with the people of Israel to celebrate Israel's 60th anniversary, there are still many countries in the world which refuse to recognize our Middle Eastern ally's right to exist. Sadly, Iraq is one of them.

The United States has provided Iraq with nearly \$50 billion in security and economic assistance to date, none of which has been repaid. Yet despite this enormous amount of aid, the Government of Iraq refuses to recognize Israel, the most reliable ally of the United States in the Middle East. This isn't right.

Establishing ties with Israel would help Iraq grow. Since its birth in 1948, Israel has emerged as a worldwide leader and expert in the agricultural, medical, and technological fields. Israel has the ability to forge a unique partnership with Iraq which would greatly benefit from the skills and knowledge of the Israeli workforce. Trade between the two countries would also help Iraq build an economy that is vibrant and independent of the energy sector while helping to foster democracy in the heart of the Middle East. This will never happen, however, unless Iraq moves beyond the draconian rhetoric of the past and recognizes Israel's right to exist.

The resolution I am introducing today calls on the Government of Iraq to recognize Israel's right to exist and establish diplomatic relations with our Middle Eastern friend. My resolution also calls on Iraq and other states to work with Israel and the U.S. in fighting the

spread of extremism and terrorism throughout the world. Finally, the resolution urges the Administration to persuade Iraq and other countries to recognize Israel's right to exist.

I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution which encourages the Government of Iraq to finally recognize our great ally's right to exist. I call on the leadership of the House to support this resolution.

CONGRATULATING JIM FRANCE, RECIPIENT OF POCONO RACEWAY'S 2008 BILL FRANCE AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 5, 2008

Mr. KANJORSKI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to ask you and my esteemed colleagues in the House of Representatives to pay tribute to James C. France, vice chairman and executive vice president of NASCAR and chairman and CEO of International Speedway Corporation, who was named 2008 recipient of the Pocono Raceway's Bill France Award of Excellence.

This award has been presented annually since 1977 to the person, corporation or organization that has made outstanding contributions to the sport of NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Racing.

The award is dedicated to the inspiration of William H.G. France, founder of NASCAR and the father of this year's recipient.

Jim France grew up in the early years of stock car racing, living and learning every aspect of the sport from his own experience and from his father and brother.

Mr. France joined ISC in 1959, working in all phases of operations. He was elected to the ISC board in 1970 and has served as the company's secretary, assistant treasurer, vice president, chief operating officer and executive vice president before being named the company's president and chief operating officer in 1987. He was also named to the NASCAR board of directors in 2000.

France has been involved in motorsports most of his life. He has been a strong supporter of motorcycle racing in the United States, as evidenced by his professional involvement in the sport. He was active in Legends car racing and the Allison "Legacy" Car Series. He was BF Goodrich Legends Cars national tour champion in 1992 and had a good deal of success in the Gatorade Florida Legends Series.

He served as starter for the U.S. Motorcycle Grand Prix in the late 1960s, raced dirt track races for nearly five years and has been a member of the American Motorcyclist Association for more than 30 years. In addition, France has raced karts on both dirt and asphalt and he has served as a board member of the Automobile Competition Committee of the United States.

Dr. Joseph Mattioli, chairman and CEO of Pocono International Raceway, has stated that Mr. France was "a driving force behind NASCAR's success . . ." He added that he is proud to announce that Mr. France has been selected as this year's award recipient.

Madam Speaker, please join me in congratulating Mr. France on this auspicious oc-

casion. Certainly, his lifelong commitment to the motorsport industry has had a tremendously positive economic impact for thousands of families in this great nation and has created a permanent place of honor for Jim France and the entire France family.

TRIBUTE TO BRIGADIER GENERAL MARK O'NEILL

HON. NANCY E. BOYDA

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 5, 2008

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I hope the House will join with me today to pay tribute to an exceptional General Officer in the United States Army, Brigadier General Mark O'Neill, upon his retirement from active military service.

General O'Neill's distinguished career spans over 30 years of service to our great Nation, culminating as Deputy Commandant of the United States Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. A native of St. Louis, Missouri, he was commissioned as an infantry officer in 1978 after graduating from the United States Military Academy at West Point. He has served in command and staff positions with the 82d Airborne Division, 10th Mountain Division, 25th Infantry Division, and the 3rd Infantry Division. He has commanded tactical units at the platoon, company, battalion and brigade level, and served as the Chief of Staff of the 10th Mountain Division. He has also served as Assistant Army Attaché in the Defense Attaché Office, American Embassy, Beijing, China, and as a strategic analyst on the Army Staff at the Pentagon. In addition to service during Operation Iraqi Freedom, General O'Neill has served during Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

In addition to attendance at numerous U.S. Army and Joint Force tactical courses and schools, General O'Neill is a graduate of the U.S. Army Foreign Area Officer's Course, the Defense Language Institute, and the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, where he earned a Master of Arts degree in National Security Affairs. He completed advanced Chinese language and area studies while assigned to the U.S. Defense Liaison Office in Hong Kong where he studied at the Beijing University School of Foreign Languages and the British Ministry of Defense Chinese Language School. General O'Neill is a graduate of the Armed Forces Staff College and the U.S. Army War College. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

His awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit with four Oak Leaf Clusters, Bronze Star Medal, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters, Army Commendation Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Achievement Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, War on Terrorism Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal with Star, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, four awards of the Overseas Service Ribbon, the Combat Action Badge, Army Staff Identification Badge, Master Parachutist Badge, Pathfinder Badge, Ranger Tab, and the Expert Infantryman's Badge.